



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 7th INFANTRY DIVISION AND FORT CARSON
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
FORT CARSON, COLORADO 80913-5000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

AFZC-DPW

11 April 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, ATTN: DAIM-FDF-B, 7701 Telegraph & Leaf Roads, Alexandria, VA 22315-3800

SUBJECT: DOD Fire and Emergency Service Annual Awards

1. It is with great pride that I nominate Fort Carson's Fire and Emergency Service for the Department of Defense (DOD) Fire Department of the Year Award. Recognizing Fort Carson's Fire & Emergency Services, as the DOD award winner is the type of recognition our Fire Department deserves and will cherish.
2. My point of contact for this action is Chief Verne Witham at (719) 526-2679.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Wilson", is positioned above the typed name.

Encl

ROBERT WILSON
Major General, USA
Commanding

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR 2003
FORT CARSON, COLORADO**

CUSTOMER SERVICE: *Superior professionals selflessly saved lives and property with caring, progressive service*

- Protecting the Army's choice, second largest, innovative and rapidly growing installation with population of over 103,000, 402k acres of land, 12M sq. ft. of structures valued at \$1B, and \$3.5B other assets. Colossal task!
- 2115 emergency responses; In flame/at risk \$11M--damage held at \$340k, only 3.1% loss rate—multi-thousand man-days of standbys, prevention inspections and training; outstanding firefighters make it happen!
- Increase in alarms and fire prevention workload, exhausting wildfires and special projects—zero staffing increase.
- Worst wildfire fire season in Colorado history! Over 2k fires charring 900k acres in the state, 121 wildfires and 18k acres burnt on our property. Firefighters on the fire-line in high gear all season—superb dedication!
 - Campaign wildfires regionally kept personnel busy, extensively used on local mutual aid and forest service resources—multi million dollar potential loss, government and private--saved—fast action and multi-agency coordination paid off. Developing a new regional wildland taskforce, unifying city/county/Army.
- DA leaders in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) preparedness, risk assessment and prototype training of responders (techs, medical & command) for the installation – now adopted DA wide—“most organized—prepared” WOW!
- Off post technical rescue -- worker caught in quarry rock crusher, seriously injured, extricated, cared for and evacuated. Patient lost a limb but lived to express his gratitude for saving his life. Highly skilled professionals.
- Fire suppression skills pay off—numerous well-involved structure fires—single family to commercial structures, stopped in their tracks—zero loss of life or firefighter injuries—fire loss held to minimum. Fine tactics!
- 1,042 EMS calls—numerous multi-patient incidents, critical medical and trauma patients—dispatcher's and firefighter's medical skills and compassionate care make positive impacts: countless lives saved.
- 191 flawless Haz-Mat responses throughout the year. Suspicious mail checks to an anthrax threat in an occupied school; small to large chemical and fuel spills; response to other jurisdictions for clandestine meth lab mitigation. Highly trained team of firefighters ready for any haz-mat or WMD. Local authorities grateful!
- Numerous mangled metal traffic accidents—rapid and exceptional extrication tactics credited for lives saved.
- Regional leaders in heavy rescue and wildland firefighting; continually called on by other local agencies for assistance. “Making a difference outside our gates”—active local involvement = positive Army image.
- Aircraft crash rescue crew rated at highest level of readiness; evidenced by two helicopter crashes—6 lives saved.

INNOVATIVENESS: *Extraordinary authority of ever-shrinking funds—cost-saving initiatives prevails!*

- Birthplace for many progressive and innovative initiatives that result DoD wide savings of millions of dollars.
- Largest and most comprehensive prescribed burn program in Colorado and the Army—wildland fuel mitigation on training areas; savings to the post and taxpayers est. \$2 M/year (thousands of acres, no escapes or damage).
- Innovative resource use—use of county, city and forest service on Rx burns, training for them= \$ saved for us.
- Saving lives and money through partnerships, automatic and mutual aid agreements with 25 agencies in 6 counties.
- Member of FEMA National US & R network (Colorado Task Force 1) Payoff = quality training and networking.
- Making global military missions happen! Provide specialized training to military elements—extensive support and assistance to deploying units' active duty, guard and reserves (training saved Army \$80k) payback—pride.
- Innovative leaders in apparatus rebuild projects, major cost savings DA wide—Doing whatever it takes.
- “Carrying the load” - hospital ambulance understaffed; we ensure the patient doesn't suffer. Lifesavers!

QUALITY MANAGEMENT: *Producing excellent customer service by treating the firefighters as the best!*

- Leadership excellence: Chief Verne Witham, first ever firefighter winning worldwide DPW Support Executive of the Year; Army wide recognition for his quality team management, progressive service and model initiatives.
- Personnel always going the extra step to make a difference; Customer Service Feedback cards prove it.
- Team concept between administration and workforce with excellent results. Diverse workforce our #1 asset.
- Accredited training division, 100% of personnel DoD certified—180 new Certs issued in 2002—it starts here.
- DoD trendsetter! Superlative communications center; 8,400 911 calls processed; pioneering regional CAD system and high tech capabilities; united with county E-911 board = zero cost services, software and equipment - \$600k annually. Value!

QUALITY OF LIFE: *“People first—mission follows” committed to ensure the best for personnel and community.*

- Morale booster and cost savings with our self-help built, state of the art training center; firefighters take great pride.
- Firefighter safety: drug free; upgraded RIT, REHAB, medical monitoring and accountability procedures. Safest!
- On technologies cutting edge! Firefighters equipped with most advanced equipment. Finest living conditions.
- Community involvement: Parades, fire muster activities, “Drive Smart” extrication demos, “at risk teens” program, food drives, military wives' club support, Santa's helper, medical standby at special events.
- Public Education: EMS, fire prevention and safety: booths, displays, demos and classes—Kid's Smokehouse, Sparky visits, extinguisher training & blood pressure checks. Direct contact with more than 7,000 people.

OTHER: *Motivated, caring and progressive is who we are. “The best firefighters in the U.S. Army!”*

- 100% participation physical fitness program resulting in sustained arduous fireground performance with zero loss of time injuries due to lack of fitness. Major cost savings in reduced work comp claims. Wellness #1.
- Valued as one of the finest organizations by installation command; many personal & organizational awards.